



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: South Pacific Tuna Act

OMB Control Number: 0648-0218.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Request: Revision and Extension (of a currently approved information collection)

Number of Respondents: 41

Average Hours Per Response: License application, 1 hour; VMS registration application, 45 minutes; catch report, 1 hour; unloading logsheet, 30 minutes; expression of interested, 2 hours; and renewal, 15 minutes.

Burden Hours: 536

Needs and Uses: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) collects vessel license, vessel registration, catch, and unloading information from operators of U.S. purse seine vessels fishing under the provisions of the Treaty on Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America (Treaty). The Treaty provides access for U.S. purse seine vessels to fish in the exclusive

economic zones (EEZs) of Pacific Island Parties to the Treaty (PIPs). The PIPs include Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. This collection of information is required to meet U.S. obligations under the Treaty. This collection of information also includes purse seine net sharing reporting requirements and purse seine whale shark encirclement reporting requirements, pursuant to regulations implementing decision of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC).

The South Pacific Tuna Act of 1988 (16 U.S.C. 973-973r) and U.S. implementing regulations (50 CFR part 300, subpart D) authorize the collection of information from U.S. purse seine vessels fishing in the EEZs of PIPs under the Treaty. Vessel operators must submit annual vessel license and registration (including registration of vessel monitoring system (VMS) units) applications and periodic written reports of catch and unloading of fish from licensed vessels. They are also required to ensure the continued operation of VMS units on board licensed vessels, which is expected to require periodic maintenance of the units. The information collected is submitted to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) through the U.S. government, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The license and registration application information is used by the FFA to determine the operational capability and financial responsibility of a vessel operator interested in fishing under the Treaty. Information obtained from vessel catch and unloading reports is used by the FFA to assess fishing effort and fishery resources in the region and to track the amount of fish caught within each PIP's EEZ. Maintenance of VMS units is needed to ensure the continuous operation of the VMS units, which, as part of the VMS administered by the FFA, are used as an enforcement tool. If the

information is not collected, the U.S. government will not meet its obligations under the Treaty, and the lack of fishing information will result in poor management of the fishery resources.

Similarly, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act (WCPFCIA; 16 U.S.C. 6901 *et seq.*) and U.S. implementing regulations (50 CFR part 300 subpart O) authorize the collection of information from U.S. vessels fishing for highly migratory species in the WCPFC's area of competence. The net sharing and whale shark encirclement reporting requirements under this collection of information is needed for fisheries management and enforcement purposes. If the information is not collected, the U.S. government will not meet its obligations as a member of the WCPFC, and the lack of fishing information will result in poor management of the fishery resources.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Frequency: On occasion.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

This information collection request may be viewed at reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202) 395-5806.

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[FR Doc. 2020-03456 Filed: 2/20/2020 8:45 am; Publication Date: 2/21/2020]